

### **Reflections on February 2010 Internship Field-based Activities**

February marks the first month of my Field-based Activities as required by the new Internship course. As a practicing Director of Technology in La Vernia ISD, my Internship activities are naturally somewhat different from those of the typical student. After discussing the best course of action with Dr. Abernathy, we agreed that under the guidance of my Mentor, LVISD Superintendent Dr. Tom Harvey, I would pick tasks that I perform as a part of my duties, but examine them with a critical eye towards which ISTE Technology Facilitator (TF) Standards and Performance Indicator they address. Additionally, two separate, special technology tasks are designated as Internship Projects.

February's tasks began with an upgrade and reconfiguration of our Renaissance Learning server which provides Renaissance Place products including Accelerated Reader, Accelerated Math, Star Math and Star Reading to our students, as well as other related products including Star Early Literacy. Instead of concentrating on the technology operations and requirements, I examined the effect this server, and the instructional software it provides, has on classroom instruction and assessment.

Obviously, this task allowed me to demonstrate my knowledge, skills and understanding of concepts related to technology, so it helped me meet Performance Indicator TF-I.A under Standard I. Additionally, looking at Standard III, as the software facilitates using technology to support learner-centered strategies addressing the diverse needs of students, Performance Indicator TF-III.B applies, as does Performance Indicator TF-III.D because the software facilitates managing student learning activities in an environment enhanced by technology.

Because Star Reading and Star Math focus on assessment, Standard IV is addressed under Performance Indicator TF-IV.A under which technology is applied in assessing student

learning of subject matter using various assessment techniques. Finally, Standard VII is addressed under Performance Indicator TF-VII.A because this system helps teachers make use of school technology facilities and resources to implement instruction. It is essential that I adequately address Standard VII, as Williamson and Redish (2009) note that "...it is critical that technologists establish a stable technological infrastructure to support the effective use of technology in schools" (p. 147).

My next major task in February dealt with the preparation and submission of E-Rate forms to obtain Federal reimbursement funding for telecommunications and Internet access expenses. This task is vital to providing the infrastructure and Internet services so vital to instruction for our digital native students, whose instructional needs are very different from our needs at their age. Prensky (2005) states that "Our students are no longer 'little versions of us,' as they may have been in the past. In fact, they are so different from us that we can no longer use either our 20th century knowledge or our training as a guide to what is best for them educationally" (p. 8).

This task helped me meet requirements under Performance Indicator TF-II.C calling for me to identify and locate technology resources and evaluate them for accuracy and suitability, as well as multiple Performance Indicators under Standard TF-VII, requiring technology facilitators to promote the development and implementation of technology infrastructure, procedures, policies, plans, and budgets. A secondary task this month, meeting with the Superintendent and Director of Finance on the technology budget, also addressed this Standard.

My last major task in February involved updating and submitting our ePlan. Updating the LVISD ePlan Long-Range Technology Plan is essential to insuring my teachers have the support they need to help students succeed. According to Rhoades (2009), "Today's faculty

members (elementary through college) are using podcasts, wikis, chat rooms, online curricula and virtual realities to help students become successful in the classroom” (p. 24). This activity helped me meet multiple Performance Indicators under Standard TF-VIII, Leadership and Vision. To meet this Standard, educational technology facilitators must contribute to the shared vision for campus and District integration of technology while fostering an environment and culture conducive to the realization of the vision.

While reflecting on the month’s activities, I gained a deeper understanding of the requirement for my activities to support the instructional vision of the campuses and District. I had always realized how important my work was towards providing supporting infrastructure, but I now realize I must consider our instructional vision as I contemplate further expansion and upgrades of our infrastructure and plans, and make sure my actions support attainment of our vision.

This connects to my past learning as it reminds me of the importance of needs assessments to the infrastructure acquisition and planning process, and the District vision is a statement based upon instructional need. My future learning has been impacted by my realization that I must become more familiar with our campus and District visions in order to more clearly articulate them and to facilitate providing support for these visions.

Viewing my performance on these tasks from an educator’s point of view, I learned that I have done a good job providing infrastructure, plans and policies that are supportive of instruction, but I need to place more emphasis on helping my teachers to make use of these resources. My performance during these tasks was impacted by deadlines, particularly regarding E-Rate and ePlan, and I realize that I must find better means to perform these tasks without suspending my other tasks and duties during a last-minute “lock-in” as I usually do; while this

method ensures deadlines are met, it lessens my ongoing support for my teachers at a vital period when last-minute instruction and preparations for high-stakes testing is underway.

Based on these activities, I will take a new appreciation of the implications of campus and District visioning on technology planning to future contexts. As a learner, I gained a glimpse of ways that I can better support instruction, and more effectively integrate campus and District needs into future technology planning and infrastructure acquisition. I was effective as a learner because these Field-based Activities helped me look at the tasks I perform every day in a new light, and this has transformed my views regarding ways that I can better support instruction. I will transfer my learning to new situations by remaining cognizant of the role of visioning in all my activities.

As a lifelong learner, I must perform further research regarding ways to accommodate deadlines while continuing to perform essential educational support tasks; while I have viewed these extra tasks as a distraction to meeting my deadlines in the past, I now realize that supporting my teachers as an educational leader must be a priority 24/7/365, so I must utilize better time management and delegation techniques to help me better serve my teachers.

#### References:

- Williamson, J. & Redish, T. (2009). *Technology Facilitation and Leadership Standards: What Every K-12 Leader Should Know and Be Able To Do*. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.
- Prensky, M. (2005). Listen to the Natives. *Educational Leadership*, 63(4).
- Rhoades, E. (2009). Can Web 2.0 Improve Our Collaboration? (Technology Usage in the Classroom) *Techniques*, 84(1).